

# **MCC at 100**

## **Mennonites, Service, and the Humanitarian Impulse**

**Sept. 30–Oct. 2, 2021**

### **A Virtual Mennonite Studies Conference The University of Winnipeg**

In 1920 North American Mennonites formed Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) to aid famine ravaging Mennonite communities in the Soviet Union (Ukraine). Over the ensuing century, MCC has grown to embrace service in more than 60 countries. It has also brought together a wide variety of Mennonite groups, including Brethren in Christ and Amish, and served as a force for global ecumenical and interfaith partnerships. This centennial conference presents papers that examine the past, present, and future of MCC. The papers reflect on the Mennonites' response to the biblical call to love one's neighbor through practical acts of service. Proposals from a wide variety of disciplinary perspectives are welcomed.

#### **SCHEDULE (All times CDT)**

##### **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30**

##### **1:00-1:15 pm: Welcome and Introduction**

Greetings: Ben Nobbs-Thiessen, Chair in Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg  
Greetings: Rick Cober Bauman, Executive Director, MCC Canada  
Conference Introduction: Alain Epp Weaver, MCC U.S., and Aileen Friesen, Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg

##### **1:15-3:00 pm: Creating the MCC Humanitarian Impulse in the 1920s**

Chair: Esther Epp-Tiessen, Winnipeg  
Jon Weier, George Brown College, "World War I, the Canadian Humanitarian Impulse and the Founding of MCC"  
Peter Letkemann, Winnipeg, "Negotiating with the Soviets: Alvin Miller of American Mennonite Relief, 1920-26"  
Ken Sensenig, MCC East Coast, "A Rapid Response Establishes 100-year Patterns: MCC in 1920"  
Ad van de Staaij, The Hague, "American and Dutch Food-aid in 1922: Differing Attitudes"

3:00-3:30 pm: Break

**3:30-5:00 pm: MCC, Emigration, Immigration, and Refugee Newcomers**

Chair: Anna Vogt, MCC Ottawa

Aileen Friesen, University of Winnipeg, "Trapped in Transit: MCC and Mennonite Emigration from the Soviet Union in the 1920s"

John Eicher, Penn State-Altoona, "Just Right but Dead Wrong: The MCC's Troubled Relationship with the Fernheim Colony, Paraguay, 1929-1945"

Erika Weidemann, Texas A&M University, "The MCC, Aid Organizations, and the Immigration of Chortitza, Ukraine, 1947-1957"

Stephanie Phetsamay Stobbe, Menno Simons College, "MCC and Resettlement of Refugees from Southeast Asia in Canada"

**Featured Evening**

**7:00-9:00 pm: MCC and Indigenous-Settler Relations in Turtle Island**

Greetings: James Currie, President, University of Winnipeg

Chair and Respondent: Wendy Kroeker, Canadian Mennonite University

Adrian Jacobs, Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre

Elizabeth Penashue, Sheshatshiu First Nation

Erica Littlewolf, Indigenous Visioning Circle, MCC Central States

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 1**

**8:30-10:00 am: Operating Under Authoritarian Regimes**

Chair: Eliakim Sibanda, University of Winnipeg

Ben Goossen, European University Institute, "Dove and Swastika: Collaboration between MCC and the Nazi Regime, 1933-1942"

Johannes Dyck, Bibelseminar Bonn, "MCC and the Iron Curtain: Serving the Mennonite Family in the USSR after World War II"

Bernard Thiesen, Berlin, "MCC-Work and the German Democratic Republic's Stasi State Security Services, 1945-1989"

10:00-10:30 am: Break

**10:30 am-12:30 pm: Programmatic Shifts within MCC Over a Century**

Chair: Ruth Plett, MCC Canada

Lynn Longenecker, MCC U.S., "MCC and Education: A Century of Learning"

Paul Shetler Fast, MCC U.S., "From Expatriate Clinicians to Community-Led Public Health: Six Decades of MCC in Haiti, 1958-2020"

12:30-1:30 pm: Break

### **1:30-3:00 pm: Agriculture and Religion in Global Context**

Chair: Jeremy Wiebe, Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies

Ben Nobbs-Thiessen, University of Winnipeg, "The Bolivia Mystique: MCC  
Between the State, Peasants and International Development, 1960-1985"

Anna Holdorf, University of Notre Dame, "Sowing Seeds and Saving Souls: The  
Work of MCC in Postwar Puerto Rico"

Jeremy Rich, Marywood University, "The Gospel of Chicken and Rabbits: Mennonite  
Volunteers and Agricultural Development in the Congo, 1960-1975"

3:00-3:30 pm: Break

### **3:30-5:00 pm: MCC and Transnational Flows of Agricultural Knowledge**

Chair: James Kornelsen, Canadian Foodgrains Bank

Iqbal Chowdhry, Dalhousie University, and Royden Loewen, University of  
Winnipeg, "Contested Knowledge: Bangladesh Farmers Meet North American  
Agronomists"

Marta Bunnett, University of Winnipeg, "A Nexus of Agricultural Knowledge: MCC  
Staff and Local Farmers in Indonesia, 1970-1990"

Christopher Sundby, Regent College, "Canadian MCC Agronomists and an Evolution  
of Knowledge"

Break

### **Featured Evening**

#### **7:00-9:00 pm: MCC as Incubator and Catalyst**

Moderator: Ben Nobbs-Thiessen, Chair in Mennonite Studies

Ryan Patterson, Carleton University, "Transnational Representation: MCC Canada  
and the founding of Disabled Peoples' International, 1981"

Allison Enns, MCC Canada, "MCC and Ten Thousand Villages: Lessons Learned in  
the Fair Trade Sector"

Paul Heidebrecht, Conrad Grebel University College, "Growing, Gifting and Failing:  
MCC as an Incubator for Relief, Development, and Peace"

### **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2**

#### **8:00-10:00 am: MCC and Peacebuilding**

Chair: Stephanie Phetsamay Stobbe, Menno Simons College

Eliakim Sibanda, University of Winnipeg, "MCC, the Brethren in  
Christ and Social Concern in Post-colonial Zimbabwe"

Grace Hercyk, MCC U.S., "Evaluating MCC's Support of Peace Institutes and  
Advanced Peace Education in South Africa, the Philippines, Burundi and  
Beyond"

Jodi Dueck-Read, Menno Simons College, "Queering Mennonite Peacebuilding"

Patricia Harms, Brandon University, "Recovering the Roots of Anabaptism: MCC  
and the Rejuvenation of Radical Discipleship in Guatemala"

10:00-10:30 am: Break

**10:30 am-12:30 pm: MCC and Identity Formation**

Chair: Ruth Rempel, Menno Simons College

Kevin Stewart Rose, University of Virginia, "Menno Markets: Ten Thousand Villages, More-with-Less, and the Neoliberal Self"

Eric Schnitger, Azusa Pacific University, "Mutual Aid and MCC: A Way of Understanding Just Economic Relationships"

Robert Suderman, "MCC and the Church: a Continuing Saga of Ambiguity"

12:30-1:30 pm: Break

**1:30-3:30: Service, Mission, Partnership**

Chair: TBD

Alain Epp Weaver, MCC U.S., "'Social Concern' and 'Evangelistic Witness': Anxieties about MCC's Relief and Service Programs in the 1950s"

Lucille Marr, McGill University, "MCC, Gender, and Service in Québec: A Case Study"

Bruce Guenther, MCC Canada, "From Russia to Syria, MCC's Changing Approach to Humanitarian Assistance: Local Partnerships and Synergies"

Philip Fountain and Laura Meitzner Yoder, Victoria University, Wellington NZ, "The Quotidian and Transcendent Nature of Service in MCC Indonesia"

3:30-4:00 pm: Break

**4:00-5:30 pm: Representing MCC, Representing Peace**

Chair: Lucille Marr, McGill University

Sasha Dyck, Montreal, "The Boys at Taxal Edge: Films by Peter Dyck in World War II England"

Timothy Gachanga, Nairobi, "Community Peace Museums of Kenya: An MCC Innovation"

**5:30-5:45 pm: Conference wrap-up; Reflections; Thankyous**

**CONFERENCE DETAILS: Delivery via zoom webinar**

**Major Contributors:** Special thanks to MCC Canada, MCC USA, Mennonite Historical Society of Canada DVCM program, the University of Winnipeg, and Canadian Mennonite University

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**JOURNAL OF MENNONITE STUDIES**

Selected, peer-reviewed papers from this conference will be published in 2022 in *Journal of Mennonite Studies*. For more information, visit: [jms.uwinnipeg.ca](http://jms.uwinnipeg.ca)